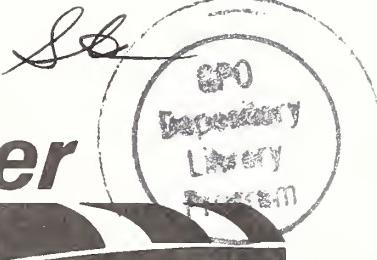


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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2661

May 6, 1994

FOREIGN EXPORT CONSULTATIONS -- Agricultural issues between Australia and the United States were discussed at recent Bilateral Trade Consultations conducted in Canberra, Australia. The talks examined the potential for further cooperation in the transition to the GATT agreement era, including establishment of the Committee on Agriculture of the new World Trade Organization. There was ready agreement to continue close consultation on farm policy issues in both countries, including Australian concerns on dairy, sugar, cotton and beef, and U.S. concerns regarding poultry, pork and horticultural products. The talks also covered agricultural trade access issues and Australia's ongoing concerns about the U.S. Export Enhancement Program and the Dairy Export Incentive Program. A further round of talks will take place later this year in Washington, D.C. Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.

HUNGER FORUM -- Access to a healthful, nutritious diet was examined in Dayton, OH at the final USDA Regional Hunger Forum series. Ellen Haas, assistant secretary for Food and Consumer Services, said that USDA plans to increase access to the calories and nutrients children need to grow, and increase availability to the nutritious diets that children need to be healthy. Representative Tony Hall (D-OH), a congressional leader in the fight against hunger, told the group that the hunger forums will help decision makers determine what new directions to take. The dialogue on hunger began last June in Washington, D.C. at the National Hunger Forum. Regional forums have been held in Burlington, VT; McAllen, TX; and Kansas City, MO. Contact: Laura Trivers (202) 720-7711.

BROWN IN THE MIDDLE -- USDA has launched a food handling and cooking education campaign to alert parents and children to the potential dangers accompanying picnics and cookouts. Proper handling of food, and careful preparation and cooking can reduce the opportunity for bacterial contamination. Thorough cooking of hamburger is being emphasized, urging consumers to "Make it brown in the middle." Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.

URBAN GREENING AND PUBLIC SAFETY -- USDA is helping to support community service work in Chicago that involves tree planting, creating urban gardens, renovating playgrounds, and patrolling the areas to reduce crime. Staff from three USDA agencies, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Forest Service, and Soil Conservation Service will work with the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences in the "Summer of Safety" program. Technical assistance will be provided by the U.S. Department of Justice. Fifty participants in the program will earn a small living allowance and a \$1,000 educational award in exchange for their service to the community. The program is funded by a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service. Contact: Joel Berg (202) 720-6350.

REDUCING WIND EROSION -- Wind tunnel tests show that crop stalks left standing after harvest protect soil from wind erosion seven times better than stalks lying flat on the ground. Tests by USDA researchers have led to improved prediction of erosion protection offered by a range of soil covers. Mathematical equations resulting from the wind tunnel tests will be used to recommend farm practices that will better control wind erosion. Contact: J.D. Bilbro (915) 263-0293.

THE GRAYING OF NONMETRO AREAS -- The U.S. will have a favorable balance of people within income-producing age groups well-into the next century. However, because of migration that consists primarily of young adults and their children, metro areas capture a much higher percentage of this population segment. The higher percentage of working age adults in metro areas has been a persistent pattern for most of this century, but never higher than at present. Retirement migration to nonmetro areas places a higher proportion of older people in nonmetro areas. The percentage of nonmetro population over age 65 was 15 percent in 1990, compared to 12 percent in metro areas. Such changes can affect rural development plans. Contact: John Cromartie (202) 219-0534.

PROPERTY TAX -- A USDA study has found that owners of higher valued holdings of farmland pay lower taxes per \$100 than do those with lesser valued holdings. The Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey produced figures showing that owners of U.S. farmland holdings valued at \$5 million or more paid 47 cents per \$100 of market value, whereas owners of holdings valued at less than \$70,000 paid \$1.45 per \$100 of value. Taxes per acre follow the same pattern. One plausible explanation for the relatively light taxation of large landholdings may be what the International Association of Assessing Officers terms "assessment bias," the systematic underappraisal of high-valued properties and overappraisal of low-valued properties. Contact: Gene Wunderlich (202) 219-0425.

WHAT THE FOOD DOLLAR PAYS FOR -- The marketing bill is the difference between the amount farmers receive for food and the amount consumers spend for consumption. USDA studies show that between 1982 and 1992 the marketing bill grew at over twice the rate of the farm value. The marketing bill now accounts for 78 percent of the cost of food. Causes underlying the growth in marketing costs include increased labor costs, more value added processing and packaging, and a higher percentage of food sold through restaurants and fast food outlets. Rising labor costs account for nearly half the increase in the marketing bill over the last decade. Contact: Howard Elitzak (202) 219-0868.

OSTEOPOROSIS -- Half of American women over age 50, and three-quarters over age 75 have significant bone loss. The cost is large in terms of bone fractures and loss of independence. The current estimate is \$10 billion annually. Research findings are indicating that one of the best methods to guard against osteoporosis is by building strong bones during childhood. Most bone forming activity occurs between the ages of 8 and 11, by age 15 there is little bone being formed. These early years also represent the time when milk consumption among young girls often decreases. Milk is a good, but not the only, source of calcium. Four 8-ounce glasses of milk provide about 1,200 milligrams of calcium. The research indicates that young girls can guard against osteoporosis later in life by increasing calcium intake between ages 5 and 15. Contact: Steven Abrams (713) 798-7000.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

WEEKLY CASSETTE:

AGRICULTURE USA #1926 -- Gary Crawford reports on new adventures in food shopping. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1407 -- New food labels; postcard campaign on cooking meat safely; low maintenance lawn care; picnic food safety; a perfect or practical lawn. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1918 -- Crop progress report; rice outlook; 30-90 day forecast; more U.S. wheat to China; dairy farmers get refunds. (Weekly reel of features.)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE:

Wednesday, May 18, agricultural outlook; Thursday, May 19, catfish processing, former USSR update; Friday, May 20, cattle on feed, wheat; Monday, May 23, trade update; Tuesday, May 24, weekly weather and crop report. These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest weather and crop conditions; Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy and acting assistant secretary Patricia Jensen on food safety education program for children and parents regarding the importance of cooking hamburgers thoroughly.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on guayule rubber; Eric Parsons reports on ASCS dairy refunds.

TV SATELLITE CHANGES

In response to your requests, USDA TV News Service has made changes to the satellite schedule. We believe the new times will be more convenient. The new transmission schedule:

Thursdays	3:45 - 4:00 PM ET
Saturday	Service is discontinued
Mondays	11:00 - 11:15 AM ET

In addition, the satellite has changed. USDA TV programming is now available on C-Band Satellite Galaxy 7, transponder 9, channel 9, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 3880 MHz. Questions? Contact Lynn Wyvill (202) 720-9951.

A BIG SNOW...late in April is a rarity, says Charlie Kampa (KBRF, Fergus Falls, MN). The 7 1/2 inches covered small grain crops recently planted. Charles immediately had an Extension agent on the air who said that if the snow melts quickly damage would likely be minor. Charlie says 30 mph winds hit the region every day during the last two weeks of April.

TEN INCHES OF SNOW...this late in the year is a record, says Emery Kleven (KMNS, Sioux City, IA). Producers farming river bottom land made sure that they planted their corn early in case a weather problem developed. Last year floods kept them out which resulted in deficiency payment troubles for some producers. But the plants hadn't emerged yet and the snow added useful moisture. Emery takes his morning farm program on the road once a week, says its getting good response. Another attractant is the \$15,000 pickup he's giving away this season.

LONG DAYS...in the field can prompt taking shortcuts to save time. Shortcutting safety is an invitation to trouble. Help make sure they're at work tomorrow. Talk safety.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



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Room 528A
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WEAK AREAS...in the levees are allowing seepage of Mississippi River water onto fields, says Chris Kimbell (KNOE, Monroe, LA). Around-the-clock efforts are being made to reinforce the earthen structures, some of which are 100 yards wide at the base and several stories high. The river remains at a high level. Chris notes its a case of having too much water or not enough, the area generally is dry and needs rain.

MANY PRODUCERS...served by David Lee (KHMO, Hannibal, MO) are counting on good production this year. Dave says the outcome for many will determine whether they have an auction or put the place up for sale. Last year's floods drained cash reserves, but the attitude pot remains full. Planting in late April was at a standstill due to wet conditions, although forecasters do not expect flooding. The outlook calls for above normal precipitation and below normal temperatures. Dave says his producers could use a break.

LETS HELP CONSUMERS...stay fit as a fiddle. Make it brown in the middle. (See story on page 1)

VIC POWELL *Vic Powell*
Office of Communications